ASIFA EAST

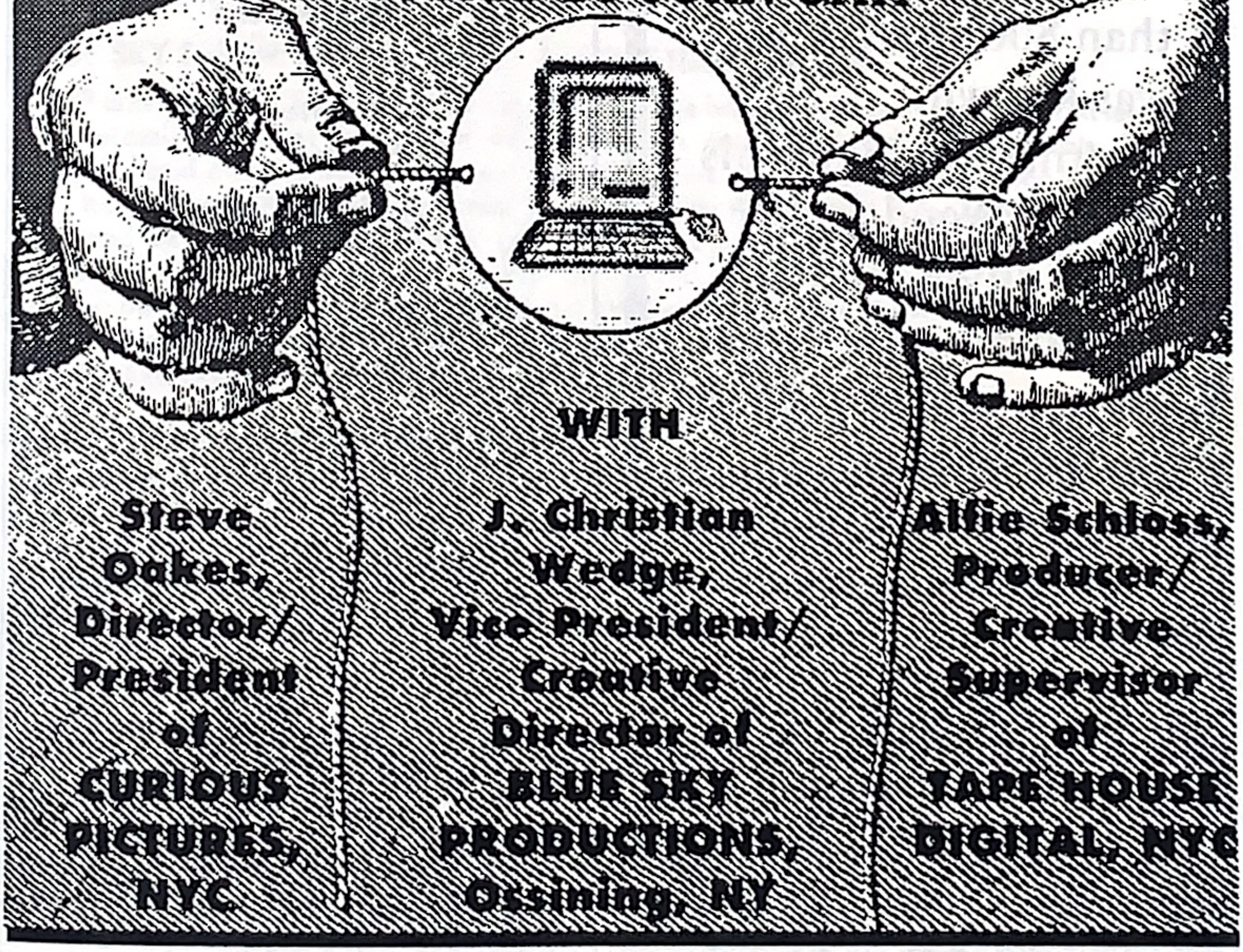
ANYMATOR

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANIMATED ARTS

DIGITS VS. DIGITAL

A PANEL DISCUSSION

HOSTED BY JOHN GATI



WITH

Steve Oakes,
Director/
President
of
CURIOUS
PICTURES,
NYC

J. Christian Wedge,
Vice President/
Creative
Director of
BLUE SKY
PRODUCTIONS,
Ossining, NY

Alfie Schlossy
Producer/
Creative
Supervisor
of
TAPE HOUSE
DIGITAL, NYC

April 22 at 6 p.m. New York University, Room 108 ▪ Admission Free

APRIL 1994

Walter Lantz, the last of the Hollywood cartoon producers of the 1930's and 40's, died on March 19th at the age of 93. In his lifetime he produced more than 800 shorts and was known internationally for his Woody Woodpecker and Andy Panda characters.
In next month's issue we will explore Lantz's career and accomplishments.

ASIFA-EAST
The International Animated Film Society
c/o Linda Simensky
470 West 24th Street, #15A
New York, N.Y. 10011
A PROGRAM OF
THE NEW YORK
FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

ASIFA EAST
The International Animated Film Society (New York Chapter)

A program of the New York Foundation for the Arts

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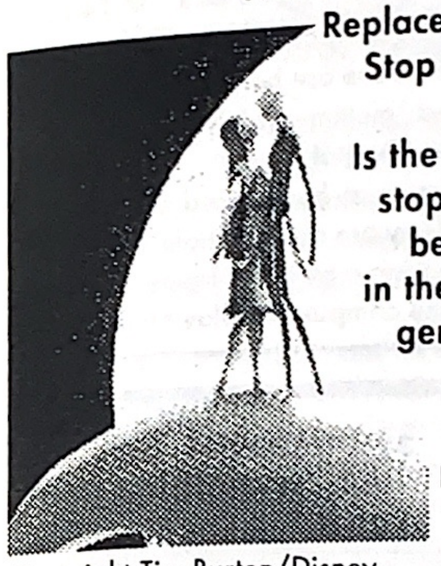
ASIFA PROGRAM • APRIL 22, 1994

DIGITS VS. DIGITAL

Will 3-D Computer Graphics Techniques Replace the Art of Traditional Stop Motion Animation?



Copyright Tim Burton/Disney

Is the future of traditional stop motion animation becoming obsolete in the wake of computer generated imagery?

Hosted by John Gati Director/Producer, with:

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BLUE SKY PRODUCTIONS, INC. - J. CHRISTIAN WEDGE

As VP and Creative Director of Blue Sky, Mr. Wedge has directed over one hundred television commercials including the award winning Braun and Chock Full O'Nuts spots. He also designed and directed the award winning Nicktoons opening for Nickelodeon. Prior to Blue Sky, he was on the faculty of the Ohio State University Advanced Center for Computing in the Arts and Design, where he taught animation theory and production and directed special projects in computer generated character design. Mr. Wedge has a BFA from SUNY, Purchase and an MA in Computer Graphics and Art Ed. from Ohio State University.
He holds a number of industry honors including awards from NICOGRAPH, FOCUS, Zagreb and the Chicago International Film Festival.

TAPE HOUSE DIGITAL - ALFIE SCHLOSS

After receiving a Masters Degree in Television from Syracuse University, Mr. Schloss went on to spend six years as Producer/Creative Supervisor for Harold Friedman Consortium. In 1984, Schloss was instrumental in the formation of Editel Graphics, which he co-managed until 1988. Schloss then launched Limelite Video's New York branch. In late 1991, he joined Tape House Digital where he currently serves as Producer/Creative Supervisor.

CURIOUS PICTURES - STEVE OAKES

Mr. Oakes began his career as an animator in a small studio in Washington D.C. In 1981 he co-founded the now defunct Broadcast Arts and tackled the company's first assignment - animating one of the first logos for a fledgling MTV. Following the success of the MTV "Sandwich" ID, Broadcast Arts quickly gained recognition and commissions for animated projects for HBO, SHOWTIME, CINEMAX and others. After moving the company to NYC, Oakes directed several hundred commercials, utilizing multiple animation and special effects techniques for numerous clients. In addition to commercial work, Steve Oakes also supervised production for the first season of PEE WEE'S PLAYHOUSE and directed performance artist Anne Magnuson in VANDEMONIUM for Cinemax. In 1993, Oakes co-founded a new company, Curious Pictures, where he continues his evolution of mixed-media, filmmaking and commercial productions.

THE BYTE STUFF

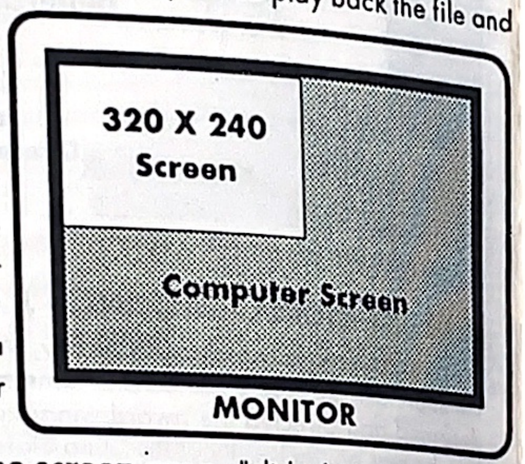
a continuing look into a tool of the trade.

By Brian Cirulnick

Creating Animation For Digital Video

It didn't take long for the animation industry to move to the computer. Even though computers are now being used for the creation of animation, even more are being used for animation playback. Thanks to the software wizards who placed "multimedia" into the hands of the artist, a new part of this revolution is upon us - called "Digital Video".

Digital Video comes under some brand names that you may have heard of - Quicktime™, Video for Windows™, MPEG™, and Moviepack™. They are all essentially the same thing in that they are all methods and standards for compressing a series of frames (animated or live-action) into a realtime playback file. This allows the computer to play back the file and display the video, "kind of like watching TV on your computer". Except that it is, currently, FAR more limited than TV in terms of what it can display or display properly. It will look different on every computer depending upon that computer's hardware setup is. Faster machines will show the motion better, machines with high-end color cards will display the image better, etc., thus, when creating animation for such a limited environment, the producer/director should take these considerations to heart:



1) Don't move a large object across the screen area - "slide the cel" is great for TV and film, but here, if you drag across a large object, the more data the computer will have to deal with, and you risk having the image break-up slightly if the large object has to move at a high speed.

2) Forget about camera movement - No tilts, pans, zooms, or rotates - you are changing the entire field with every frame. Since these Digital Video compression schemes rely on only saving what has changed from the previous frame to the current frame, the more that changes from frame to frame, the less compression you get and the harder it becomes for the computer to run the playback. It's like being back in the days of early sound movies where the camera had to be locked down due to it's size.

3) Keep the colors as flat as possible - Color gradations and complex backgrounds with dots or cross-hatching could cause compression problems as well. Generally, the less complex the scene, the better the compression will be.

4) Keep aware that full-screen playback is still a little while off - and thus, your final may be shrunk to 1/4 screen size (about 320 x 240 pixels), so if anything has to be read (signs, subtitles, etc.) they should be as big as possible, so that they are legible in the final (see illustration).

I hope all this doesn't scare you off from this new and exciting medium. Advances are being made every day, and within 5 years, it'll be a whole new ballgame. If you consider that 5 years ago, we didn't even have this medium, and now how far it has come, it's easy to extrapolate how advantageous it will be 5 years from now to have a full understanding of animating for digital video starting today.

WOMEN IN ♀ ANIMATION

I've been on the road a bit lately, since very little of the work I do actually happens in New York. One of the advantages, however, is that I get to experience the animation communities of other cities. (And one of the advantages to that, of course, is that it has made me want to stay in New York.)

I've spent a lot of time in Los Angeles over the past year. Unlike New York, San Francisco, or Boston, where animators are generally considered to be exotic — artistes, at the very least — in Los Angeles there are a lot more of them, and they are mostly employees of the television and film animation industry.

I noticed that the L.A. animation industry seemed to have problems and situations that seemed very specific to the L.A. television and film industry. One topic that I thought I'd report back on is the Women In Animation group which was formed earlier this year.

Women In Animation (WIA) was formed this year by Rita Street (editor/publisher of ANIMATION Magazine), with a few other women from the industry, as a sort of companion group to ASIFA Hollywood, which in L.A.sometimes has more of the feel of a "guys club." WIA, which is still in its formative stage, was created to be a professional, non-profit organization established to foster the dignity, concerns, and positions of women who are involved in any and all aspects of the art of animation. Their goals are two-fold: to look out for women's issues in animation, and to foster animation as an artform. There are already 300 names on the mailing list, and meetings generally attract an attendance of 100-150.

Various committees have been formed, including an Advisory Committee, a Program Committee to set up meetings, events, workshops, and speaker panels, a Membership Committee, a Finance Committee, and a Communications Committee. Their next screening and panel discussion features seven women animators discussing the creative process, particularly regarding women's issues in this area. An Historical Committee was set up for the purposes of documenting women in the field, and a documentary may be in the works.

Early on, I was invited to join the advisory committee, and hopefully, to spearhead the creation of a WIA chapter in New York. Initially, I told them, we didn't have the same problems in New York that they had in L.A. — studios were smaller and structured differently, and our ASIFA chapter seemed to be more accessible to women. Then I realized that since I work in a primarily female department in a very liberal corporation, I actually had little real experience with what the daily workplace was like for women in animation. What I did notice, though, was that women did need more of a network, even if just to meet each other. Upon speaking with various women in the industry, I learned that this was indeed the case. Mentoring also came up as a need of some of the younger animators.

Initially, I told the L.A. group that a WIA group in New York would probably be primarily a social group. What I plan to do over the next few months is continue talking to women in the industry with the hopes of getting together a steering committee to discuss the formation of this chapter. (And perhaps, our first party.)

The Los Angeles chapter is working on becoming a national group with chapters in other cities, and they expect this to happen in about six months. I'd like to get some feedback from those of you who have any ideas about a WIA group in New York, or have any interest in joining such a group. After hearing about the activities of the L.A. group, I felt excited about the potential this sort of group could have in NY.

Ultimately, I would also be curious to know how it's changed for women in the industry in New York over the years. Any of you with thoughts on either topic should give me a call (212-258-7727) to share your thoughts.

Linda Simensky - President, ASIFA-East

Pepe Ruiz

Pepe Ruiz, a former union organizer known to many in New York animation, died this past December as a result of an ironic accident. Pepe , 86, sustained head injuries after being struck by an automobile in April of 1993. The trauma affected his memory and in the following months, confined to a Hackensack nursing home, he was unable to identify visiting relatives and former associates. The operator of the vehicle was the 52 year old soul singer Wilson Pickett, who was arrested for driving while intoxicated. His alcohol level, at the time of the accident, was more than 200 points above the legal limit.

The irony stems from the fact that Pepe was a recovered alcoholic, who had abstained for over twenty years and had actively helped other alcoholics through his work with AA. He received little credit for these efforts but those that knew Pepe, and the hours spent at the Rustic Bar, may recall him in later years calmly sipping coffee while others around him were downing the hard stuff.

In the 1930s, when every aspect of the film field was unionized except the animators, Pepe became a key player in bringing collective bargaining to the field. He himself had worked as an inbetweener and asisstant animator at MGM but shifted his interests to the cause of organizing animation artists. The 30s were a time when most were barely getting by on low salaries and those that did get substantial pay rarely received screen credit. These points became issues for Pepe and his bargaining skills were honed under the tutelage of orgainizer Herb Sorrel. In the 1940s, after the strike at Disney's and the formation of the Hollywood union he came to New York to organize Terry-Toons and Famous Studios. There was a natural resistance, but these shops eventually capitulated as did later units that sprung up with the arrival of televison commercial production in the 1950s. It was during this period that he brought the New York animators under the wing of the IATSE and established local 841.

In the late 1960s, to forestall what he thought was a shift away from established policies, Pepe attempted to create a separate entity. While many members went with him, the effort was short-lived and he left the union. He took on various jobs but eventually became a librarian in New Jersey, a task he must have enjoyed tremendously because he loved books. At one time the union office was located on Fifth Avenue near the old Brentannos book store and it was not unusual for him return to the office with an armful volumes in their colorful jackets, " I should stop going in there", he would say, "I can't resist buying books". To producers Pepe represented opposition, though many of them were not the ogres he often made them out to be. It was just that they often misread real needs. Emotions ran to the extreme on both sides and some were still fuming years later as was Shamus Culhane, who in 1986 came down heavily on Ruiz in his book Talking Animals and Other People. Yes, there were conflicts but New York animation artists benefitted, for many years, from the wage increases and the excellent health insurance and pension plan that came about through their own urging and through the efforts of Pepe Ruiz. Today the papers are full of talk of health care and Pepe would be among the first to point out that nothing changes.

Howard Beckerman

Inside Eric Fogel's HEAD

by Bill Lorenzo

Hey, let's face it: when MTV debuts THE HEAD in October and the mainstream press starts covering this new animated program, you're going to see a great deal of coy, cute article titles like the one above. So let me be the first.

I was treated to an advance look at the pilot episode of THE HEAD, and it is a science-fiction/action story about a young man whose life is altered by a symbiotic relationship with an extraterrestrial. While the boy's body plays host to the creature, the alien likewise provides an element that has been missing in the young man's life.

THE HEAD is already in the early stages of production here in New York and I spoke to its creator Eric Fogel after he had spent a long day at the recording studio. Originally from Long Beach, Eric studied at New York University under filmmaker/author John Canemaker. We discussed this creative undertaking and his earlier work which led to this project.

EF: I guess my career sort of began right out of NYU. Upon graduation I was fortunate enough to have one of my films that I produced there licensed by the Spike and Mike Festival of Animation.

BL: Which film was that?

EF: That would be THE MUTILATOR.

BL: Which of their compilations did it appear in?

EF: It ran with their SICK & TWISTED FESTIVAL (1991)... and it was definitely sick & twisted material.

BL: So that was a student film.

EF: Yes, that was a student project. That was really my first experiment into cel animation. I did it pretty much to see if I could do it...and I guess I could.

BL: Were there any earlier experiments that you did on your own, in addition to the work you did in college?

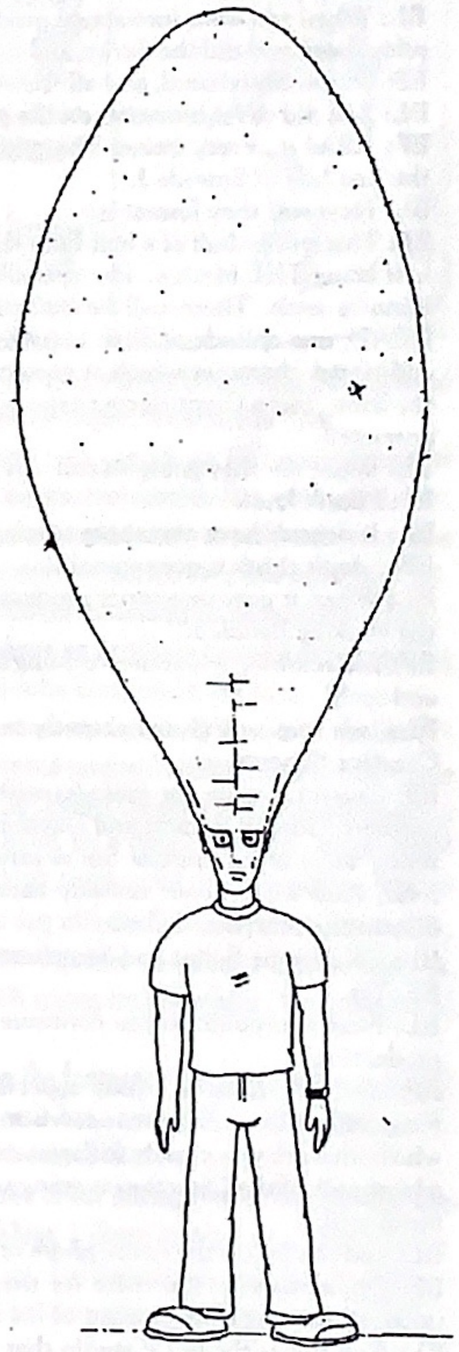
EF: Yes, I started making films when I was in high school...I got a Super 8 camera and was doing little animated films. And then I actually took a course at the School of Visual Arts on weekends while I was still in high school just because I was so interested in it.

BL: So, how did this current project come about?

EF: Actually it's sort of interesting. MTV bought the rights to THE MUTILATOR this other character, those films were with the SPIKE AND MIKE FESTIVAL, and I produced two minutes of new animation involving THE MUTILATOR which were going to be included in BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD. However, Standards and Practices decided that that material was too violent and that they (MTV) could not air that material at all.

BL: So THE MUTILATOR was actually going to be worked into the BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD script?

EF: Yes, something that they'd watch on TV and it would be their favorite show. You know, (mimicking Beavis:) "Mutilator's cooool" or something like that. But then all this violence in the media started coming into play and I sort of saw the writing on the wall that there might be trouble with that stuff getting on the air. So I said I better delve back into my sketchbook and see what else I've got in there, and lo and behold I found a picture of this guy with an enormous head. Based on that sketch I created a storyboard, which ultimately became the pilot episode. So I showed MTV the storyboard after I knew that there was going to be this trouble with THE MUTILATOR, and they



© 1994 MTV Networks

bought the character based on that storyboard.
BL: Really?
EF: Yep.
BL: In planning long range with MTV, what were they after in terms of content or expandingwhat you had given them?
EF: What I did, after they bought the rights to the character and then after they put up the money to do the pilot, I think right before the pilot was completed, they asked me to design 13 story outlines involving the character forming a series. Which I did. So I went back and put together 13 stories involving this character...They're all a continuation of one large story so it's sort of a serial. Each episode will end in a cliffhanger. And after a few meetings, based on those outlines, they were ready to commit to a series.
BL: When you went into actual production on the pilot short, you did the Script and Storyboard?
EF: Script, Storyboard, and all the Animation.
BL: You did the Animation on the pilot episode?
EF: All of it...every frame. The pilot will become the first half of Episode 1.
BL: How will they format it?
EF: This will be half of a half-hour show, the other half being THE MAXX. The episodes will run ten minutes each. There will be an episode of THE HEAD, one episode of THE MAXX, and then an additional character which is going to be hosting the show, like a Crypt Keeper-type of deal, but also animated.
BL: What are they going to call this series?
EF: I don't know.
BL: It doesn't have a working title?
EF: I don't think it does actually.
BL: When it goes into series production, how will the work be handled?
EF: You're asking where are we doing the animation and such?
BL: In a sense. Will you actually be on board as Creative Supervisor?
EF: Correct. I write the episodes with two writing partners, Gordon Barnett and David Benullo. Currently we're up to Episode Six as far as the Script form. And we're about halfway through Episode Five in the Storyboard phase.
BL: OK. So you Script and Storyboard, then?
EF: Yes.
BL: From this point do you continue to supervise production?
EF: Yes. We have a layout supervisor, Sharon Fitzgerald, and an animation supervisor, Ray Kosarin, who both work very closely with me. And in a sense a large part of the Direction is going to come from me as well.
BL:And you follow the entire phase of production?
EF: Oh, absolutely. I'm there for the whole nine yards, all the way through post.
BL; And this is the MTV studio that handles the BEAVIS & BUTTHEAD work?
EF: We're putting together mostly a new crew for THE HEAD and there's some spill over from BEAVIS.
BL: Are they giving the studio a name or will it just be copyright MTV Productions.
EF: Well, the show is MTV's THE HEAD, I guess under MTV Productions is where it would fall.
BL: I noticed that for a brief short film it moves along in a nice narrative fashion and it also moves along musically. Since you just
came from the studio today, talk to me about tracks. Do you supervise recording sessions?
EF: I'll be supervising all of the recording sessions as far as dialogue. I'll be doing all the slugging. And also working very closely with the music and effects people, to make sure that everything definitely has a certain style to it, the music does
complement the picture very carefully. So, I want to make sure allthat remains consistent.
BL: Is it all going to be original scores?
EF: Yes. Actually, we worked out a deal with the people that did the pilot and a large amount of it will be original music for each episode. I'll sit down with them with storyboard and/or picture,
and we'll discuss the moods, particular themes for each character, reoccurring themes. And these guys are pretty good. This is TCM Productions and they're pretty skilled at figuring out those kinds of logistics.
BL: Do you feel you have more control of the writing, the track or the animation process?
EF: I feel like I have sort of the final word as far as everything is concerned. You know, if something's bothering me, I'm not going to let it pass by.
BL: Any apprehension about being the first new project after the BEAVIS & BUTTHEAD success and notoriety?
EF: I think just mostly excitement. I think that we're doing a show that hopefully people will have never seen anything like it, and I think we've got a lot of surprises in store, as far as the story, the relationships of the characters. We've got a lot of complex things in the works.
BL: When will they debut this particular program?
EF: My air date right now is mid-October of 1994.
BL: Will you have all 13 episodes completed by then?
EF: We'll have half completed, I believe. And then something likethe last episode gets finished a week before it's ready to air, or something like that.
BL: What do you consider influences in animation or cinema?
EF: A lot of '50's sci-fi...a lot of old Warner Bros., Tex Avery. And then I think a lot of it is stuff that sort of comes from experience; stuff from real life. There are characters in there that are based directly on people that I know, that we've been able
to get a lot of humor out of.
BL: I will be interested to see how it evolves.
EF: As am I.

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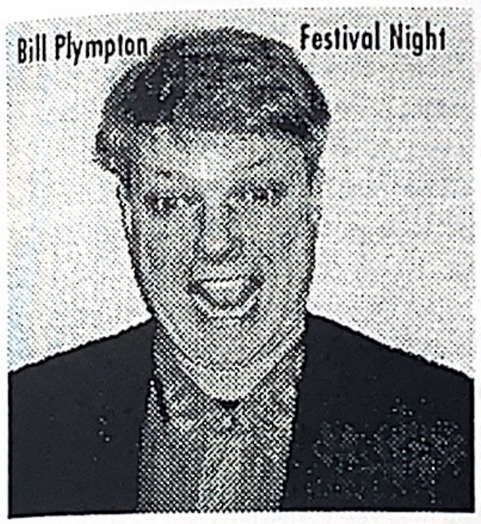
BLA BLA BLA

by John R. Dilworth

What I loved were the people. It was as though you had taken a trip and you did not need to use frequent flyer mileage. The New York Underground Film & Video Festival held recently at the Anthology Film Archives proved to be everything a festival should. Immediately as you entered the lobby you began to buzz. That why can't I stop smiling high that makes one believe you've had some ecstasy. That indescribable feeling of event built on not by celebrity but on community, the downtown community.

The Festival Directors Todd Phillips and Andrew Gurland feel "...that certain film festivals have lost touch with their original intentions. With "independent' festivals being run by privately endowed committees and all too often embracing a Hollywood crowd, there remains a serious gap which we will fill." That need to have jury liberation and judging by peers is similar to the way the ASIFA-EAST Animation Festival selects films. Several animated films were featured in the festival including; Ruth Peyser"s GO TO HELL, Robert Banks Jr."s X-THE BABY CINEMA, and Eugene Salandra's Radical Faeries quest , FAERIE FILM.

More notably was the premiere of Bill Plympton's first live-action feature length film, J.LYLE. Written by P.C. Vey, Bill Plympton and Jessica Wolk-Stanley, J. LYLE tells the story of an opportunistic yuppie landlord who has toxic ambitions but decides better to find success with love. This is an extraoridnary film self-financed by an artist who has never known demarcation lines.


Bill Plympton Festival Night

In my own way I shall take you on an MTV-ish overview of J.LYLE. Hold on here we go...Cartoonish flat minimalist retro colors and interiors, wonderful phony sets, mixed media animation including, stop-motion, cell, animation over live action and cut-out. The use of professional associates as supporting actors- I swear I saw Jimmy (I have an Academy Award) Picker and Big Man Pictures president John Donnelly in the film.

Three big musical numbers including one with the body's organs as chorus. Big-lipped singing building facade, a sex scene done standing in a corner, breast fondling in a diner while eating white food, a singing penis on a man's shoulder, more breast fondling of a cashier, high angle point of view looking down a woman's brassier, people locked in the trunk of their cars, a hypnotic dog with the best eyes you've ever seen, sexual dysfunction with a power vacuum and ad infinitum. My favorite sequence was when J.Lyle torments an invalid elderly woman with throwing her cat out the window. I am still crying from laughter. The brilliance of that set up was the anticipation not the act.

The film's storytelling is challenging. The plot seemed only to set up the fantastic sight gags. In the end I just did not care what happened to J.Lyle. At some point he had a catharsis but I missed it. I did not believe his conversion. From the opening J.Lyle was a 2-D personality and he remained that way.

After the screening the film received a good reception and Bill spoke about the making of the film and how he protected his crew at one time from a hostile transvestite brandishing a sharp instrument. That's what it's like to shoot in New York. A cult film is what Bill claims he is hoping for. But it already is . Bill has an audience and J.LYLE does not fail them. What I do often with films I enjoy most but do not have the time to watch entirely is to edit my favorite scenes almost trailer-like and watch that.

AN OBSERVATION ON FIVE ANIMATED FEMALES

by JAMES G. PETROPOULOS

In light of the fact that March was Women's History Month, I thought I would comment on sexism in classic animation. I also found that an analysis of the female characters involved in these cartoons was in order. In my opinion (actually, off the top of my head), and based on what I had available to me cartoonwise, I deemed that the following five female characters cover the spectrum of female attributes, good and bad (keeping in mind that studio animation was dominated by males and that society was extremely sexist, or at the very least ignorant of the potential of women): They are Betty Boop, Olive Oyl (her old design as well as her postwar Famous Studios design), "Red" (MGM's torchy chanteuse, alias "Red Hot Riding Hood", "Swing Shift Cinderella", etc.), Lois Lane (from the Fleischer/Famous "Superman series), and Aeon Flux (that's right, from MTV Liquid TV/Colossal Pictures). I chose these characters (though three out of five were from the Fleischer Studios) primarily because a) they're human or human-like (as opposed to the more asexual mice, ducks, etc.); b) they appear in at least three cartoons each, hence the possibility of better establishing a behavior pattern for the character; and c) because these particular characters are either the lead or at the very least the main focal point of the films they appear in.

All characters © 1994 their respective studios

Let's begin with Olive Oyl. Of all the characters I chose, Olive Oyl best typifies a traditional female stereotype in male-dominated society...the fickle shrew. Her love affair with Popeye, by today's standards, was not a healthy one. Popeye is a possessive chauvinist, and Olive Oyl is quite simply co-dependent. Two shorts stand out in illustrating Olive's co-dependence: "Females is Fickle" and "Wimmen Hadn't Oughtta Drive" (both 1940). In "Females is Fickle", Olive brazenly interrupts Popeye (who is happily knitting anchor chain from iron rods) so she can show him her new goldfish. Popeye seems indifferent until the goldfish escapes from it's bowl into the ocean and a panicky Olive bids Popeye go in after it. After gargantuan efforts he rescues the fish and returns it to its bowl with a gesture of chivalry. Olive suddenly decides that the fish is sad and cooped up and immediately pours the contents of the fishbowl overboard. An exasperated Popeye (in an abusive maneuver) throws about ten life preservers on Olive and flings HER overboard. As she thrashes and gurgles, Popeye (back to knitting anchor chain) happily comments, "You bet 'yer last nickel that wimmen is fickle sez Popeye the Sailor Man". In "Wimmen Hadn't Oughtta Drive", Popeye picks up Olive Oyl to go out for a drive. The problems start when Olive Oyl insists on driving. Popeye, always willing to accommodate Olive, offers to teach her. While I personally think women are equally capable of good roadsmanship, Olive Oyl, by virtue of her co-dependent personality, was NEVER meant to drive. She proves this as, among other things, she drives along the sidewalk window-shopping and goes the wrong way on a one-way street (insisting to Popeye that all the other traffic is going the wrong way!) In the end, after destroying Popeye's vehicle, Olive is satisfied to learn safe driving while being pushed along by Popeye in a scooter. The old Olive Oyl had very low self-esteem, crying whenever Popeye admonished her for bad driving, but still not getting it right the second time. The Postwar Olive Oyl (completely redesigned with a contemporary outfit) had more self-esteem but was just as fickle as the old Olive. In fact, she was ALMOST a liberated woman in one short where she contemplates running for president. As she sings "If I were President...", she lists her campaign promises, all of which are aimed at the baby boomer housewife. Nowhere in her song does she promise equal pay for equal work or other issues which plague women to this day. So much for Olive Oyl, who in summation seems to be incapable of getting by without a big, strong man.

Betty Boop is a step above Olive Oyl on the liberation ladder. Despite the fact that she is patterned after a stereotypic, ditzy jazz-age flapper, Betty has at least proven that she doesn't need a man to get through the day. Her sometime canine boyfriend Bimbo is, unlike Popeye, physically weak and ineffectual, but no less chivalrous. The Problem with Betty is her flirtatiousness, and the come-on nature of the songs she sings. One GLARING example is a short called "Betty Boop's Big Boss" (1933). Betty Boop applies for a job as an office secretary, and when asked (in front of literally a thousand less attractive applicants) what her skills are, she goes into a suggestive number called "You'd be Surprised" in which she confesses "though I can't type well at all but if I sit on your knee, You'd be surprised!, etc." Meanwhile, the boss is fantasizing about making whoopee with Betty and ejects the others. Once hired, she goes about her job rather brainlessly. Finally, her boss makes a pass at her, which she politely refuses. In a fit of hormones, he persists until Betty calls in not only the police (led by Bimbo), but the Army, Navy, and Marines as well! Bimbo and his fellow cops are beaten back repeatedly by Betty's boss until at last Bimbo orders his men to blast down the building with machine gun fire. As the top floor of the collapsing building reaches ground level, the cops pull up the shade to reveal Betty willingly smooching her boss. In a sense, the ending is revolting because of all the awareness surrounding sexual harassment and politicking in today's workplace. While Betty is vulnerable, she is certainly no victim. Because of her double standard, it is hard to see Betty as a truly liberated woman of sound judgement. Then too, the censors caught that and from 1935 to her demise in 1939, Betty was a spinster with no apparent interest in men. Betty can be summed up as a woman who knows she's sexy but wants to appear innocent. She's a ditz, but an independent ditz who won't be bossed around by any man...unless she wants to be!

Moving up yet another rung on the road to animated liberation is Tex Avery's ravishing "Red", the star of such shorts as "Red Hot Riding Hood", "Swing Shift Cinderella", Uncle Tom's Cabana", "Wild & Wolfy", etc.

In general, Red is something of an updated version of Betty Boop in that she dances and sings, but that's where the similarities end. She has, unlike Betty, an offstage persona. Cold, condescending, sophisticated (even when dressed in rags as in "Swing Shift Cinderella"), Red not only KNOWS she's sexy, but has the brains to successfully evade the Neanderthal advances of the "Wolf". All of Red's shorts are somewhat similar in that she inevitably sings her torch song and that the Wolf's libido is displayed in a hilarious but crass manner. In short, Red is little more than a sex object to the wolf, and takes apparent pleasure in his displays as she puts her heart in her stage show. She is, however, aware of her effect on the male sex and acts accordingly offstage. Never does the wolf get his way with her, and so much the better. Once again, however, despite her cleverness, it is Red's looks and not her brains which have given her the status she enjoys as a popular showgirl. Still, it is nice to see that lustful wolf get his comeuppance at the hand of someone who would otherwise be branded a member of the weaker sex!

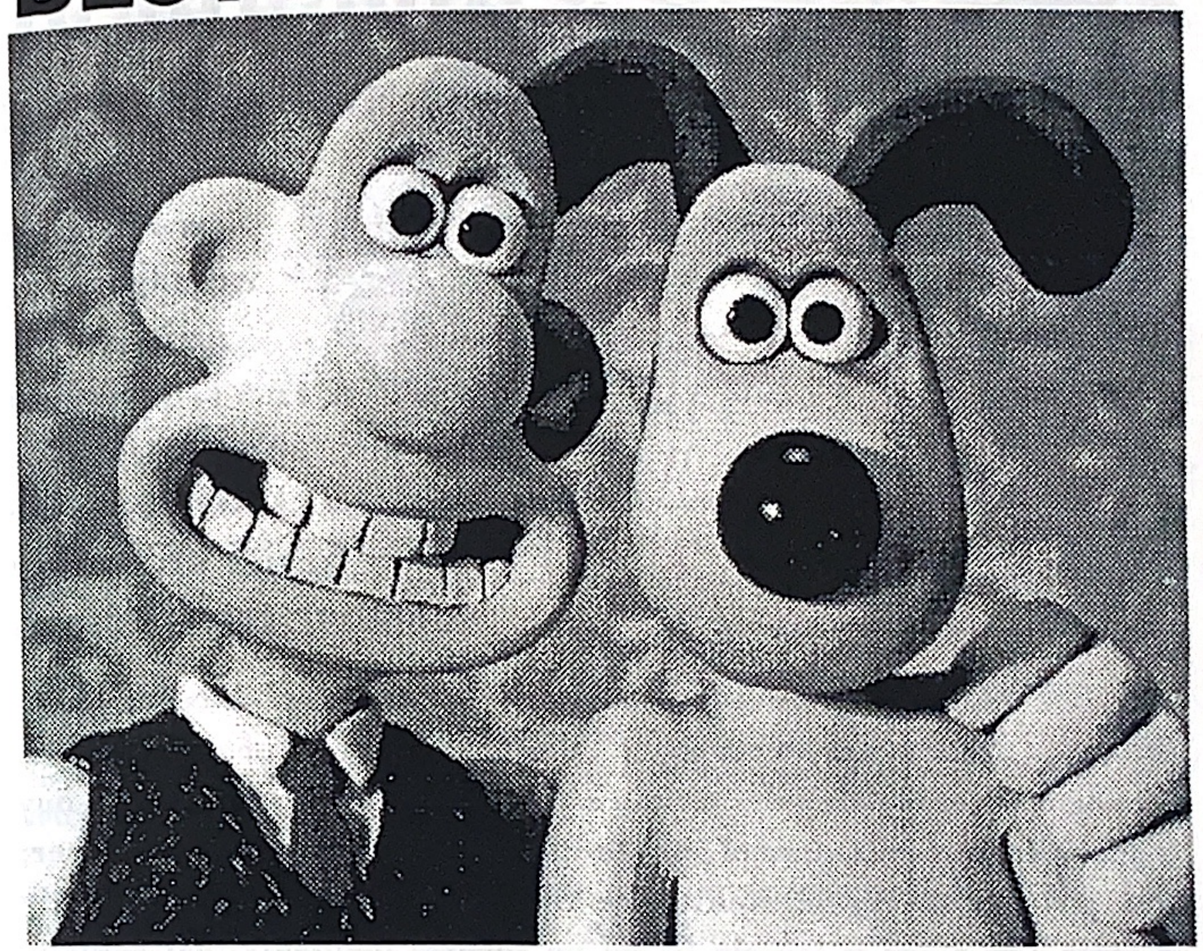
Whereas Red is placed in a cartoony setting, her more realistic animated contemporary Lois Lane exists in a more or less "real world" scenario. She is smart, attractive, independent, and by all accounts a superior news reporter. Unlike any of her predecessors, she is ambitious; it is this ambition which drives her to beat any of her male cohorts, particularly Clark Kent, to "get the scoop" and thus Lois Lane can safely be considered the first truly "liberated" female cartoon character. In addition to her ambition, she is also brave; this is her weakness, and the reason for Superman's existence. In "Japoteurs" (1942), Lois wants the story on the new secret bomber so she stows away, even as the saboteurs hijack it. She sneaks over to the radio and broadcasts a "mayday", only to be caught, bound, and dropped out of the bomb bay. In "Jungle Drums", she flies a plane into the jungle where she crash lands and attempts to uncover a Nazi communication station before she is caught. Many other "Superman" shorts are variations on this general theme. In my opinion, Lois Lane could easily have had her own series WITHOUT Superman and they would have worked just as well. The only attribute which Lois was not given by her creators was the ability to defend herself. Superman served that purpose, but even so, Lois Lane remained cool and unflappable (unlike later incarnations of her in live action movies and TV) in the face of danger and thus set a precedent which, alas, over the next two decades (i.e. the "baby boom") nearly faded from animation.

Aside from debatable attempts by the Disney Studio to empower traditional fairy-tale characters like the Little Mermaid and Belle (from "Beauty and the Beast) with liberated ideals, the best example of the woman of the '90's and beyond is the indestructible Aeon Flux. Like Betty Boop, she is promiscuous; like Red, she is sexy; like Lois Lane, she is intelligent, courageous, and agile; unlike any of them, however, she is not only capable of defending herself but also capable (and quite willing) of doing considerable destruction herself. Granted, while Aeon Flux is seen by many as a "model with a gun" (as were her predecessors in the Japanese animated features which no doubt inspired her), there is more to her than that. Consider the fact that while she is on par with any male character, she has lost NONE of her femininity! She is extremely sensual, almost hormone driven (episode 4, where she licks her gun provocatively while watching her target make out with another woman), and possibly bisexual (episode 11, where she licks the hair of her fellow female agent as they pass each other). In short, she represents every element of our present morality (I'll let YOU judge it!) for better or worse, from women in combat to bisexuality to extreme violence. Whether or not real-life women espouse or abhor these morals is not as important as the fact that in this day and age, in this country at least, any woman could BE Aeon Flux and there is nothing any male can do about it, unless he shoots faster!

And so it is. Unfortunately, these are cartoons, and in the real world there are still countries where a woman like Lois Lane or Aeon Flux simply doesn't exist, and where women like Olive Oyl can be legally tortured for talking back to their husbands. Let us keep this in mind next time we laugh at Olive Oyl's antics.

Incidentally, anyone interested in helping promote women's rights in oppressive countries should contact Amnesty International for more information.

ACADEMY AWARD BEST ANIMATED SHORT



THE WRONG TROUSERS

an Aardman Animations Ltd.

Production by NICK PARK.

Other nominees in the category:

BLINDSCAPE,
A National Film and Television School Production by STEPHEN PALMER.

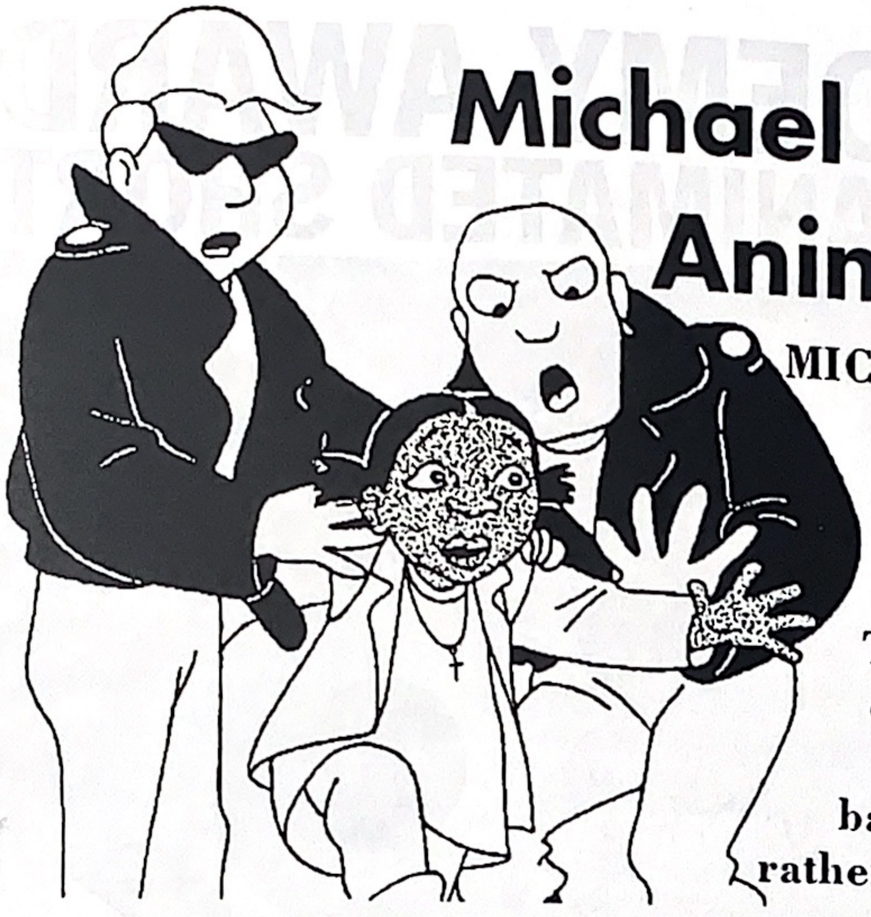
THE MIGHTY RIVER, A Canadian Broadcasting Corp./Societe Radio-Canada
Production by FREDERIC BACK and HUBERT TISON.

SMALL TALK, A Bob Godfrey Films
Production by BOB GODFREY and KEVIN BALDWIN.

THE VILLAGE,
A Pizazz Pictures Production, by MARK BAKER.

Nominated in the **VISUAL EFFECTS** category

TIM BURTON'S NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, Buena Vista, PETE KOZACHIK, ERIC LEIGHTON, ARIEL VELASCO SHAW and GORDON BAKER.



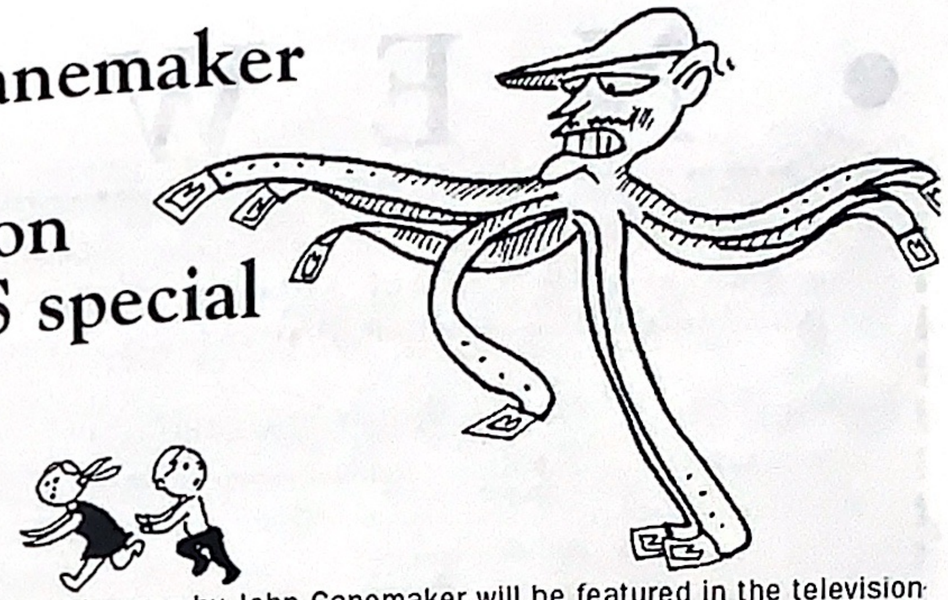
Michael Sporn Animation

MICHAEL SPORN ANIMATION is trying a new form of animation. The studio just completed two films that are based on reality rather than fantasy.

WHITEWASH tells the story of two afro-american children who are attacked by a white street gang. The older boy is beaten, and his younger sister is painted white, in an obviously racial attack. The boy has to overcome his sense of guilt for not being able to protect his sister; the girl has to regain confidence to return to school and the city streets.The story is loosely based on several incidents that actually occurred. the script was written for director MICHAEL SPORN by playwright, NTOZAKE SHANGE, the author of FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO COMMIT SUICIDE WHEN THE RAINBOW ISN'T ENUF. The celebrity actors RUBY DEE and LINDA LAVIN, voice the principal adult characters. The 25 minute film will air on HBO in the Fall.

CHAMPAGNE'S STORY is an animated interview with a 14 year old girl, CHAMPAGNE, whose mother committed murder. Champagne was 6 at the time. Since then she has been raised partially by her grandmother and partially by a convent of nuns in Queens, NY. In her life, Champagne has a mother, no father, a grandmother, no grandfather and the nuns. The interview with the girl detailing her own life was wholly animated by MICHAEL SPORN and completed in his studio in New York.

John Canemaker creates animation for CBS special on Child Abuse



NEW YORK — Animated images by John Canemaker will be featured in the television special BREAK THE SILENCE: KIDS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE, produced by Arnold Shapiro Productions. Hosted by Jane Seymour,the program airs on CBS on May 31, 1994.

BREAK THE SILENCE features live-action interviews with four children who have survived incest, abandonment, sexual and physical abuse. At key points, animation blends seamlessly into their narratives to give powerful, sensitive visual expression to each child's experience.

"Animation enables us not merely to hear the children's stories but to visualize them from a child's perspective," says producer Brenda Reiswerg of Arnold Shapiro Productions. "John Canemaker's design concepts really capture each child's inner strength and courage."

John Canemaker is well known for his ability to explore complex subjects in a visual style that informs viewers and involves them emotionally.

Canemaker's credits include the Academy Award-winning documentary YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIE; the PBS programs WHAT DO CHILDREN THINK OF WHEN THEY THINK OF THE BOMB?, THE CREATIVE SPIRIT, DANCE IN AMERICA and Penn & Teller's BEHIND THE SCENES; commercials for Gay Men's Health Crisis; the Warner Bros. feature THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP; the animated shorts JOHN LENNON SKETCHBOOK, CONFESSIONS OF A STAND-UP and CONFESSIONS OF A STARDREAMER, and the Galaxy Classroom Project, an interactive program for inner city schoolchildren.

In addition to his film productions, Canemaker is a tenured professor and head of the Animation Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. An internationally-recognized scholar of animation history, he is author of four acclaimed books and more than 100 magazine articles; he has appeared on TODAY, ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT, THE DISNEY CHANNEL, and National Public Radio, and at film and animation conferences around the world.

BREAK THE SILENCE is a follow-up to Arnold Shapiro Productions' 1992 special, SCARED SILENT: EXPOSING AND ENDING CHILD ABUSE, which drew 50 million viewers as the first non-news program simulcast on all three major networks and PBS.

• NEWS •

The Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center screens animated films. Recently shown as part of the MOVIES FOR KIDS program was YOURS FOR THE TAKING by Astfa-East member KAREN AQUA.

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB [DAVE BORTHWICK] & FOOD [JAN SVANKMAJER] "Beyond bizarre...animated movies that take the genre into surreal, nightmarish places" To be shown at Film Forum in the week of April 13-19.

Also: A LITTLE ROUTINE by GEORGE GRIFFIN, 1994. "A witty animated journey into the minds of both father and child, as bedtime approaches." April 20 - May 3 at Film Forum. GEORGE GRIFFIN has also designed a Film Forum "constructivist" T-Shirt. T-Shirt and Film Forum program information: 212-727-8110.

VIRGINIA CENTER FOR MEDIA AND CULTURE will hold its 2nd Annual Confernce featuring workshops on fundraising and the keynote address: REFLECTIONS ON MUSEUMS IN THE AGE OF VIRTUAL REALITY. MARY JANE COLEMAN, founder of the SINKING CREEK FILM FESTIVAL will also be present to screen highlights from the Sinking Creek's 25 year collection, featuring films by JANE AARON, KAREN AQUA, GEORGE GRIFFIN and many others. For information on the conference: Maureen O'Halloran, Media Center, 145 Ednam Drive, Ch'ville, VA 22903. Phone: 804-924-3296.

Prize winning films from ASIFA-EAST'S 1994 Film Fest were recently screened in San Francisco in an April 2nd showing at the Exploratorium. Congratulations to '94 festival winners JANE HOWELL, JOHN DILWORTH & JOHN MOYNIHAN. All three have been contacted by a major New York-based network to develop their respective talents into possible future programs.

AWARDS

GOLDEN REEL AWARD for Best Sound/Animated Series was recently presented to HORTA EDITORIAL & SOUND of Los Angeles for their work on the DISNEY program BONKERS. Other programs nominated for the category were NICKELODEON'S REN & STIMPY SHOW and ROCKO'S MODERN LIFE.

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CELS!
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Resources

by Margaret Frey

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING
offers the Employment Outreach Program. Job information in Public Broadcasting and related fields is offered over the phone by an automated system which allows the user to specify 1) area of interest and 2)geographic preference. The service lists jobs from all over the country and is updated weekly. Among this weeks offerings:Graphic Designer for Interactive Media/WGBH Boston - Designing and animating interactive educational software on a Mac Platform. Dozens of other listings. Contact: Employment Outreach Project at 202-879-9794

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE-NEW PROGRAM SOLICITATION
ITVS is a nonprofit organization funded by, but independent from, The Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Created to "increase the diversity and scope of programming available to public television." ITVS solicits innovative proposals from independent producers, selects projects for funding and promotes them for broadcast on television. Up to $2 million has been advocated for use of programs selected by ITVS. Applications are currently being reviewed. Submit individually or as representatives of producing teams. Deadline: April 18. Contact: ITVS, 190 Fifth St., #200, Saint Paul MN 55101. Phone: 612-225-9035.

THE COMEDY MAGAZINE
is a bi-monthly publication currently seeking cartoons, illustrations, comic strips etc. For possible inclusion in future issues. Contact: Wendy Appleby, Production Coordinator, 5290 Overpass Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93111.

WGBH NEW TELEVISION
seeks digital-based work of up to 30 minutes in any genre that uses the medium or technology in artistic ways. Screened works will receive $110/minute. Submit 3/4" or 1/2" work, finished or in progress to: WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134. Phone: 617-492-2777.

ANIMATION MAGAZINE
is seeking animation writers and other submissions for possible inclusion in future publications. Submit writing samples to: Rita Street, Animation Magazine, 5889 Kanan Road, Suite 317, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 or Dial 800-996-TOON. [Anymator also invites members to submit articles, press releases, illustrations or suggestions for the newsletter.]

CLICK 3X
a new Manhattan multimedia company, is looking for animators with tradional and computer skills. Also Macintosh and Paintbox artists. Send resume and cover letter to: Click 3X, 16 West 22nd Street, NYC 10010. Fax: 212-629-5976.

FILMFESTIVALS

THIRD ANNUAL FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL
The stated focus of this fest is "Film as Art." In addition to independent films, traditional and computer animation will be showcased. Reflecting the growth of Orlando as a film production center, this is one of the nation's fastest growing festivals.Application deadline: April 15. Contact: Professor Tee Collins, Florida Film Festival, Selections Committee, Animation c/o Enzian Theater, 1300 South Orlando Avenue, Maitland FLA 32751. Phone: 407-823-2983.

MELLOW MANOR PRODUCTIONS - "SPIKE & MIKE" SEEK SUBMISSIONS
The producers of Spike & Mike's Festival of Animation are interested in seeing and hearing about new films, projects and ideas for inclusion in their many festival and distribution compilations, including the "Sick & Twisted" & "Regular"programs. They are also seeking interested parties to develop a computer animated "Intermission" piece or an "End of Show" segment. Mellow Manor pays for ink, paint, camera work in 35mm, 16 to 35mm blowups and lab costs. For "Sick & Twisted" or "Regular" guidelines, contact: Michael Eastwood, Production Coordinator, Spike & Mike's Festival of Animation, 7488 La Jolla California, 92037. Phone: 619-459-8707. Fax:619-459-8722.

OTTAWA FILM FESTIVAL
The 10th Ottawa International Animation Festival will have a deadline of July 15th, and entry forms should reach all North American ASIFA members by late February. Mounted every two years on a shoestring budget, this is the only full-fledged animation festival in North America and it deserves our full support. We'll give you more information in a later newsletter. For those of you who would like to contact them with ideas for workshops or programs, the director, Tom Knott, has proved quite responsive in the past: Ottawa 94, 2 Daly, Ottawa (Ontario), Canada K1N 6E2. FAX: (613) 232-6315. Phone: (613) 232-6727.

PENCIL TEST MACHINE FOR SALE

The unit features animation stand, foot pedal, counter, remote control, Toshiba KV-6110A Time Lapse VCR, Panasonic CCTV 49mm Camera and B&W monitor. The machine is virtually brand new, purchased in '93 from Animation Controls in California for $6,200. Current owner, Michael Eastwood of Spike & Mike is willing to sell for $5,200 or best offer. Phone: 619-459-8707 Fax:619-459-8722.